

V.—Notes on the Birds of the Province of Buenos Ayres.

By HENRY DURNFORD.

[Continued from 'The Ibis,' 1877, p. 203.]

IN continuation of my previous notes on the ornithology of this district (Ibis, 1877, p. 166 *et seqq.*), I have a few further remarks to make on species already mentioned, and other species to introduce to the list. The nomenclature used is that employed by Messrs. Sclater and Salvin in their 'Nomenclator Avium Neotropicalium'*.

1. GEOTHYLPIS VELATA (Vieill.); Nomencl. p. 10.

Not uncommon at Baradero in April 1876, and found in low willows and thickets bordering the river. I have not observed this bird near Buenos Ayres.

[Mr. Durnford's skins (which he has labelled *Basileuterus vermicivorus*) are females of this species.—EDD.]

+ 2. CYCLORHIS VIRIDIS (Vieill.); Nomencl. p. 13.

Common in December in the riverain wood at Punta Lara. Iris light reddish brown; beak light yellowish brown, under mandible lightest; legs lavender, soles flesh-colour. Sexes alike.

+ 3. PROGNE CHALYBEA (Gm.).

This is the correct name of the *Progne* termed *P. purpurea*, Ibis, 1877, p. 168. I called it in my MS. *P. domestica*, which name Dr. Burmeister gave me. *P. purpurea*, no doubt, occasionally comes here; but I have never seen it, and when I sent my notes I certainly did not mean to refer to the same bird as I saw at Chuput, which was undoubtedly *P. purpurea*, and of which I sent skins.

+ 4. PETROCHELIDON PYRRHONOTA, Ibis, 1877, p. 169.

This Swallow was observed on its migration on the 4th March 1877, at Moreno, and on the 15th April 1877, at Lujan bridge. On both occasions they were flying steadily N.N.E.,

* [We have carefully looked over Mr. Durnford's specimens, and made some slight alterations in his nomenclature, so that it may correspond exactly with that of the 'Nomenclator.'—EDD.]

and in considerable numbers. I shot some, to identify them, on both occasions.

5. *TANAGRA CYANOPTERA*, Vieill. ; Nomencl. p. 14.

Observed in January and February 1877 in the riverain wood, but all that I have met with have been immature birds. Iris wood-brown ; beak lead-colour ; feet pale slate. Feeds on buds and berries.

6. *SALTATOR CÆRULESCENS*, Vieill. ; Nomencl. p. 26.

I found this bird pretty common near Baradero in April 1876, on low scrubby ground in the neighbourhood of water. Stomach of one shot contained buds. Beak very dark horn-colour ; legs not so dark, soles pale flesh-colour ; iris dark brown. I have not met with this bird near Buenos Ayres.

7. *ICTERUS PYRRHOPTERUS*, Vieill. ; Nomencl. p. 37.

Common at Baradero in April 1876, and seen at Alvear in September.

8. *XANTHOSOMUS FLAVUS* (Gm.) ; Nomencl. p. 37.

Rare. I shot one specimen on the 9th September 1876 at Alvear. Iris wood-brown ; beak and legs dark horn-colour.

9. *PSEUDOLEISTES VIRESCENS* (Vieill.) ; Ibis, 1877, p. 175.

Nests in November, and makes a neat structure of hair and a little grass, lined with feathers, and placed in reed-beds. It is usually situated about four feet above the water, and supported on all sides by reeds. The eggs have a white ground-colour, minutely speckled, chiefly at the larger end, with light and dark purple spots, some inclining to rufous. I have observed this species in this district in April, and also from September to December.

10. *FLUVICOLA ALBIVENTRIS* (Spix) ; Nomencl. p. 43.

A summer visitor, and pretty common then in the riverain wood. Like the other *Tæniopterinæ*, it sometimes remains motionless on a twig for some time, and suddenly makes a dart at some passing insect. It is fond of perching near the ground. Iris rufous brown ; beak, legs, and feet black, soles of latter grey.

11. *ALECTRURUS GUIRA-YETAPA* (Vieill.) ; Nomencl. p. 43.

The only occasion on which I have seen this bird was on the 11th February 1877, when I met with two near Lujan bridge. I found them in a dry open space, where the "paja" grass had been recently burnt during the dry weather. They clung to the tall stems of the grass which was still standing, or flitted rapidly from one to the other, catching insects on the wing. They were both immature birds. Iris dark wood-brown; legs and feet black; beak yellowish horn-colour, under mandible lightest. Their stomachs contained remains of small Coleoptera.

12. *LICHENOPS PERSPICILLATUS* (Gm.) ; Ibis, 1877, p. 176.

This bird nests in October. Its nest is made of small pieces of rushes or grass, lined with hair, and placed in a tuft of grass about two feet from the ground, and in the immediate neighbourhood of water. Their first moult takes place in February, and then the males put on their decided colours, whilst the females remain almost the same as before: previous to the moult both sexes are alike.

13. *HAPALOCERCUS FLAVIVENTRIS* (Lafr. et D'Orb.) ; Ibis, 1877, p. 177.

This bird nests about eighteen inches from the ground, in a clump of grass or low bush, and makes a very neat structure of fine grass, warmly lined with feathers and wool. I have not found the eggs.

14. *ELAINEA ALBICEPS* (Lafr. et D'Orb.) ; Nomencl. p. 48.

This is a spring and summer visitor, and at these seasons pretty common, especially in the riverain wood. The nest is a small and very neat structure of lichen or moss, lined with hair and feathers, not unlike our English Chaffinch's nest, and is usually placed about ten feet from the ground in the fork of a tree.

15. *MYIODYNASTES SOLITARIUS* (Vieill.) ; Ibis, 1877, p. 178.

Iris wood-brown; beak, legs, and feet black, soles of latter flesh-colour.

16. *MYIARCHUS TYRANNULUS* (Müll.) ; Nomencl. p. 52.

Not uncommon at Punta Lara, and nesting, though my search for the nest was unsuccessful. In its habits it resembles the other Tyrannidæ here, perching on the topmost twig of a tree, whence it gets a good view on all sides, and is well situated for catching passing insects. Iris dark brown; legs, feet, and claws black; upper mandible black, under mandible dark horn-colour.

17. *PACHYRHAMPHUS POLYCHROPTERUS* (Vieill.) ; Nomencl. p. 56.

The only occasion I have observed this bird was on the 28th January 1877, when I met with a pair in the riverain wood close to Belgrano. They were busy catching flies, making frequent sallies from a willow tree in pursuit of them. They have a loud whistling note. I was only able to shoot the male.

18. *SYNALLAXIS ALBESCENS*, Temm. ; Ibis, 1877, p. 180.

The nest of this *Synallaxis* is a large circular structure of sticks, with the aperture on one side, and the twigs around it project slightly beyond the rest of the nest. It is lined with hair and a few feathers, and placed in a bush from four to eight feet from the ground. The eggs are nearly white, having a faint greenish tinge.

19. *SYNALLAXIS SULPHURIFERA*, Burm. ; Ibis, 1877, p. 180.

On the 10th November 1876 I found the nest of this bird in the riverain wood at Belgrano. It was situated in a dense bed of reeds and scrub, and placed on the top of an old willow-stump about five feet from the ground. It was domed and circular in shape, with the aperture in one side, and formed of reeds, warmly lined with hair and feathers. There were two eggs, quite white in colour.

20. *SYNALLAXIS MALUROIDES*, D'Orb. ; Ibis, 1877, p. 180.

This bird nests in the centre of the thick tufts of paja grass growing in water, from which the nest is only a few inches distant. It makes a very slight open structure of grass, lined with a few feathers and a little wool. Eggs quite white.

21. *THAMNOPHILUS ARGENTINUS*, Cab. ; Ibis, 1877, p. 183.

The nest of this bird is a very slight flimsy structure of grass, lined with the finer fibres of the same material and a little hair. It is placed about three feet from the ground, and suspended from the twigs of a bush, which pass through some portion of the nest, and is situated in reed-beds and swampy places.

22. *HELEOTHREPTUS ANOMALUS* (Gould) ; Nomencl. p. 97.

On the 31st March 1877 I was given this bird, shot the previous day near Quilmes. It is the only specimen I have seen here, and the museum does not possess an example. My friend informed me that he flushed it from a clump of thistles. Its stomach was full of insect-remains, and on dissection it proved a female.

[It is a female of the rather rare Caprimulgine form *Heleothreptus anomalus*, which we have not previously seen from so far south. Natterer obtained it in several localities in Southern Brazil (see Pelzeln, Orn. Bras. p. 12).—EDD.]

23. *PICUS MIXTUS*, Bodd. ; Nomencl. p. 99.

Partially resident, but more numerous in the summer than the winter. The male is rather more brightly coloured than the female, and the red feathers on his head are more numerous than in the other sex.

24. *BUTORIDES CYANURUS* (Vieill.) ; Nomencl. p. 125.

Though I have never shot this bird I have often observed it in reed-beds near Lujan bridge, and less frequently at Punta Lara. It frequents the same sort of places as *Ardetta involucris* and *Nycticorax obscurus*, though it is not nearly so numerous as either of these birds, and, owing to its shyness, I have not yet been able to obtain a specimen.

25. *ARDETTA INVOLUCRIS* (Vieill.) ; Ibis, 1877, p. 189.

On the 29th October 1876 I found a nest of this bird in a small lagoon amongst a clump of tall rushes, and just above the water. It was entirely composed of short pieces of these rushes, arranged with their points meeting in the centre, and not more than seven inches in diameter, altogether a very

flimsy and slightly built structure. It contained three eggs of a bright pea-green colour, measuring $1\cdot3 \times \cdot9$ inch. I flushed one of the old birds from the nest.

26. *NYCTICORAX OBSCURUS*, Bp.; Ibis, 1877, p. 189.

In November and December 1876 I found this bird common in large flocks, chiefly immature birds, which do not attain their full plumage till more than a year old.

27. *PHIMOSUS INFUSCATUS* (Licht.); Nomencl. p. 127.

Last summer I saw some eggs of this bird, obtained, shortly before Christmas, about two hundred miles to the south of Buenos Ayres. They are of a bright azure-blue colour and very handsome. A friend who has taken the nests tells me they are found on a dry spot close to a lagoon, and composed of a few pieces of grass in a slight hollow. Four is the full complement of eggs.

15th April 1877. Common in this neighbourhood in large flocks. Birds of the year have much naked skin on the forehead, and many brown feathers on the head.

28. *CHAUNA CHAVARIA*, Linn.; Ibis, 1877, p. 190.

Though apparently such an awkward unwieldy bird, the Screamer can, and frequently does, rise to such a height as to appear a mere speck in the sky, and I have often watched two or three birds gracefully circling round each other like Eagles for half an hour at a time. They are enabled to do this owing to there being a considerable quantity of air, which is retained in small cells, between the outer skin and the lining membrane of the body, especially on the chest and stomach, and less visibly on the sides. On the 11th February 1877 I shot a young bird in downy state, presumably about ten days old. Head light rust-colour, neck pale grey, back pale chocolate; wings very small and, with the breast and stomach, grey; iris wood-brown; feet brick-red.

— 29. *DENDROCYGNA FULVA* (Gm.); Nomencl. p. 129.

Common at Alvear in September and at Punta Lara in December, congregating in enormous flocks. Whilst on the

ground they stand in an exceedingly upright position. The Ducks supplied to the ships and steamboats in the port are principally of this species, and a large number are disposed of in this way.

♂ 30. *DENDROCYGNA VIDUATA* (Linn.) ; Nomencl. p. 129.

I have never shot this bird ; but it is brought into the market in the winter in large numbers from the south, where it must be numerous at this season. Beak and legs black.

31. *ANAS MELANOCEPHALA*, Vieill. ; Nomencl. p. 129.

Rare : the only time I have met with this Duck was on the 9th September 1876, whilst shooting in the reed-beds at Alvear, about twenty miles to the N.W. of Buenos Ayres, where I flushed a male and female, and shot the latter. Iris wood-brown.

32. *QUERQUEDULA BRASILIENSIS* (Gm.) ; Ibis, 1877, p. 192.

On the 29th October 1876, whilst endeavouring to get at a nest of *Conurus patagonus* in a steep "barranca," about twenty miles to the north-west of Buenos Ayres, two of these Ducks flew from a cleft in the cliff about eighteen feet from the ground. Though we were unable to reach the spot, I have no doubt they were nesting here, and I subsequently observed two more birds on the top of the cliff.

33. *DAFILA SPINICAUDA* (Vieill.) ; Ibis, 1877, p. 192.

On the 19th November 1876 I met with a brood of these Ducks in the Las Conchas, near Moreno. On coming upon them unexpectedly, quietly reposing on the water with their mother, the latter immediately feigned lameness, to draw me away. I had to strip and plunge into the stream, and after hard work, swimming for nearly an hour, secured four ; the brood consisted of about ten.

Head above dull brown, lightest towards the base of the upper mandible, sides grey. Behind the eye is a short white streak, beneath this a rufous-brown streak, and lower still grey. Back and tail dull brown, tips of the feathery down on the wings white. Upper part of chest inclining to pale rufous, remainder of chest, throat, and stomach white. Flanks

grey. Beak dark olive, tip lighter, and under mandible lighter than tip. Legs, feet, and claws olive. I imagine these chicks to have been about eight days old.

34. SPATULA PLATALEA (Vieill.); Nomencl. p. 130.

Partially resident and common. Perhaps the easiest Duck to approach, and considered of little value for the table. Generally distributed. This bird was accidentally omitted from my last communication.

35. METOPIANA PEPOSACA (Vieill.); Ibis, 1877, p. 192.

The day before Christmas day of last year, whilst working through an extensive reed-bed, about fifteen miles to the north-west of Buenos Ayres, I found a nest of this bird, from which I flushed the female. It was made of dead rushes, warmly lined with down, and placed about six inches above the water. The eggs were ten in number, of the usual Duck's-egg colour, and measure 2.350×1.7 inch.

From all I can learn in this country, *Dafila spinicauda*, *Mareca sibilatrix*, *Querquedula versicolor*, and *Querquedula flavirostris*, all nest on the ground, generally under a clump of thistles, whilst *Metopiana peposaca* nests in reed-beds and similar places, and builds its nest just above the water.

36. COLUMBA PICAZURO, Temm.; Nomencl. p. 132.

My *Columba maculosa* (Ibis, 1877, p. 193) should doubtless be *C. picazuro*, as suggested by the Editors in a footnote.

37. RALLUS MACULATUS, Bodd.; Nomencl. p. 139.

A single bird was taken in a field of clover whilst mowing was going on at Rivadavia, on the banks of the Plata, and about seven miles N.W. of Buenos Ayres. It lived for some time in confinement, but was at last eaten by rats.

[No specimen is sent; but it would appear that this is the bird intended.—EDD.]

38. RALLUS RYTHIRHYNCHUS, Vieill.: Nomencl. p. 139.

My last communication contained a notice of a nest and eggs under the head of *R. nigricans* (Ibis, 1877, p. 193); but

subsequent observations have proved that the nest and eggs there mentioned could not have belonged to this bird. What they did belong to I am quite at a loss to understand; for the bird I saw leave the nest appeared to me a *R. nigricans*, without doubt; and I cannot guess what it could have been.

Last spring I found two nests, one at Belgrano, the other near Lujan bridge, from both of which I flushed the *Rallus nigricans*. In both cases it was composed of reeds, rather loosely put together, and situated in the centre of a tuft of reeds growing in the water, from which it was raised three or four feet. The nest at Lujan bridge contained eggs. They are of a stone ground-colour, minutely speckled all over with pink spots, and measure 1.6 inch by 1.150.

[Mr. Durnford's skins belong to *R. rythirhynchus*, not to *R. nigricans*.—EDD.]

39. *FULICA ARMILLATA*, Vieill.; Ibis, 1877, p. 195.

Since I wrote my last communication I have received eggs from the south of Buenos Ayres; and I am told that the birds are in many places quite common. The eggs may always be distinguished from those of either *F. leucopygia* or *F. leucoptera* by their superior size. They are of a light stone ground-colour, thickly speckled with blotches and spots of various shades of red, and measure 2.2 × 1.5 inches.

40. *FULICA LEUCOPYGIA*, Hartl.; Nomencl. p. 140.

Common in the lagoons to the north of Buenos Ayres. The only bird that this species can be confounded with is *F. leucoptera*; but a sure mark of distinction is the uniform colour of the wings, which in the latter species have a white bar across them, caused by the secondaries being tipped with white.

The nests of this bird and *F. leucoptera* are much alike; but the former is perhaps rather the smaller. It is formed of reeds, and placed in a clump of the same, the bottom just above the water. The eggs vary in number from six to eight, and also vary a good deal in colour. Their ground-colour is

dark greyish brown, finely mottled or streaked with rufous and darker brown, some of the spots being of a considerable size.

[We have examined Mr. Durnford's skin of this species, and find it correctly named.—EDD.]

41. *FULICA LEUCOPTERA*, Vieill.; Ibis, 1877, p. 195.

As common as *F. leucopygia*, and nesting in similar localities. Eggs of a stone-grey ground-colour, speckled and streaked with dark rufous and black spots; they vary, however, a good deal in colour. I have generally found six to be the number laid.

+ 42. *ÆGIALITIS COLLARIS* (Vieill.); Nomencl. p. 43.

From having observed this species in October, December, and February, I conclude it is a summer visitor, though I believe it is the same species that Mr. Hudson calls (*P. Z. S.* 1871, p. 261) "a pretty little cinereous Plover, with a rufous head and belted breast," and which, he says, "is also found in winter sparsely distributed over the southern half of this State." I have always found it on dry sandy ground, frequenting the same sort of places as *Æ. hiaticula* in England.

+ 43. *HIMANTOPUS BRASILIENSIS* (Brehm); Ibis, 1877, p. 198.

On the 24th December, 1876, I found two or three pairs nesting near Lujan bridge, and, after lying behind a bank for about twenty minutes, watched one old bird onto the nest. This was on rough swampy ground, and on a slightly elevated spot; it was composed of a few pieces of roots and dry grass, which were placed in a slight hollow. It contained four eggs, in general appearance similar to those of *Vanellus cayennensis*, but rather longer in proportion to their breadth. The ground-colour is pale olivaceous, thickly blotched and streaked with dark brown and black markings, chiefly at the larger end. Both parent birds showed extreme solicitude about their nesting-ground being invaded, and endeavoured first to drive me away by angry screams, and darting close by my head; and finding that useless, one of them feigned lameness.

- + 44. *TRINGA MACULATA* (Vieill.) ; Nomencl. p. 145.

Observed in October, December, January, February, and April, and very common. Usually seen in large flocks. I have sent a note on this species before.

- + 45. *TRINGA FUSCICOLLIS* (Vieill.) ; Nomencl. p. 145.

Very common in the spring and autumn. Common at Baradero in April. Always seen in flocks.

46. *RHYACOPHILUS SOLITARIUS* (Wils.) ; Nomencl. p. 146.

A spring and summer visitor ; but I have never found its nest, although I have observed it from October to March. During this time I have constantly observed it about little pools and swamps between Palermo and Belgrano, and also about Campana, on the Parana. It differs from the other Sandpipers here (*Gambetta melanoleuca* and *G. flavipes*) in preferring the neighbourhood of trees and scrub to the open lagunas or "arroyos" in the campo. In size slightly less than the last-named bird, I have seen no other Sandpiper here it can be confounded with. It has a loud sharp note, which it utters both on the ground and on the wing, and which is very like that of the Green Sandpiper at home. Its food consists of soft-bodied aquatic larvæ. Iris wood-brown ; beak black, with the basal half of both mandibles inclining to orange ; legs and feet between pea- and olive-green.

47. *LARUS DOMINICANUS*, Licht. ; Ibis, 1877, p. 201.

Adult.—Beak pale yellow ; spot on the angle of the lower mandible orange. Iris light grey. Legs pale yellowish green ; claws black.

Immature, after second moult.—Beak black. Iris wood-brown. Legs pale lavender ; claws black.

These notes were taken from specimens shot on the 8th and 9th December 1876.